



NICK CARTER WEEKLY

Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.

No. 275.

Price, Five Cents.

NICK CARTER'S ENEMY

OR
BRINGING A MURDERER TO THE GALLOWS



BY
"THE AUTHOR OF 'NICK CARTER'"

"THIS ISN'T A REGULAR STOPPING-PLACE," SAID NICK, "BUT WE'LL GET OFF HERE!"

W. E. B. DUBOIS



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No. 275.

NEW YORK, April 5, 1902.

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NICK CARTER'S ENEMY;

OR,

Bringing a Murderer to the Gallows.

By the author of "NICHOLAS CARTER."

CHAPTER I.

A STARTLING DISCOVERY.

"There's been murder, sir—murder!"

The man gasped these words in a husky voice, and caught at the stair rail for support.

He was a short, stocky man about forty years old. His face was red and dripping with sweat.

As he stood there he breathed heavily and looked as if he were in pain.

Before him stood three men who had just come down the stairs with grips in their hands.

They were the famous detective, Nick Carter, and his two assistants, Chick and Patsy.

Nick dropped his grip and took the man by the arm.

"Have you been hurt?" he asked, anxiously.

The other shook his head.

"No," he said; "I've been running hard, that's all. I heard you were going to leave for New York, and I wanted to catch you. I'll be all right in a minute."

Nick glanced at the clock behind the clerk's desk. It was in the office of a hotel in Buffalo.

The only other persons in the office at the time were the clerk and three or four guests, who were reading newspapers.

Their attention was attracted by the scene at the foot of the stairs.

Two of them got up and crossed the room curiously.

"I think," said Nick, in a low tone, "that we'll wait over another train."

He went to the desk and told the clerk that he would hold his room for a little longer.

Then he returned to his assistants and the man who had met them as they were about to leave.

"Come upstairs," he said, "and we'll hear what you have to say."

Nick did not know the man, and he had no idea what the case was that had brought the man to him, except that one remark that there had been murder.

The man had said nothing else.

Evidently he knew who the Carters were, and meant to interest them with the fewest words possible.

He had succeeded.

It wasn't the fact that there had been a murder that caused Nick to change his plans, but there was something in the man's manner that seemed to show that the case was one of unusual importance.

All went upstairs and sat down in Nick's room.

By that time the stranger had caught his breath and could speak without difficulty.

He came to the point at once.

"Mr. Carter," he said, "you fished a dead man out of the Niagara rapids yesterday and thought that he was Jean Lacrosse, *alias* White, *alias* Malcolm, a criminal you were hunting for?"

Nick nodded.

"Patsy fished the man from the river," he responded, "but I was there, and in other respects your statement is correct. We certainly believed, and still believe, that the man was Lacrosse, whom we had chased over a good bit of Canada."

"You were mistaken, Mr. Carter."

"Mistaken!"

"Yes, sir. You couldn't help it, for there were some things you didn't know. It's nothing you need be ashamed of——"

"Never mind that," interrupted Nick. "Any man is likely to make mistakes. If I have made one I want to know it."

"Well——"

"One moment. You seem to be a man who knows how to go straight to a point. So let's have an understanding and get at this thing in the right way."

"Agreed, Mr. Carter."

"First, then, who are you?"

"My name is Dunn, and I belong in St. Catherines, Canada. I am deputy sheriff there."

"Ah! I have heard your name, but never happened to meet you before. I understand now how it is that you know just how to talk of a matter of this kind."

"I ought to, for I've had business with criminals for the last fifteen years."

"Did you know Lacrosse?"

"A little. His real name is Malcolm, you know."

"Yes, but we have known him so long as Lacrosse that it's easier to speak of him by that name."

"That's all right, so long as we understand it. Now, this man Lacrosse had a brother who went under his own name of Malcolm, and who lived near St. Catherines. I knew him well."

"And what of him?"

"He's been murdered."

"Sure?"

"Absolutely. It was his body you fished from the rapids."

The detectives looked at each other.

"By gum!" exclaimed Patsy, "has that slippery cuss got away from us again?"

"Nothing would surprise me less," responded Nick.

The Carters had first come up against Lacrosse in England, where Chick had an adventure with him.

After that there was an exciting chase into the wilds of Canada, at the end of which Lacrosse was taken to a hospital in Montreal to recover from a bullet wound inflicted by Chick.

When he got well, Lacrosse was to be tried for several crimes that the Carters had traced to him.

The day before the trial, Lacrosse escaped from the hospital, and the next the Carters knew of him

he was found as the head of a gang of smugglers operating on Lake Ontario.

All the smugglers except Lacrosse had been captured.

He had fled and been pursued to the vicinity of Niagara Falls, where it was known that he was trying to cross the line into the United States.

The three detectives and many local policemen were on the lookout for him, when Patsy risked his life by jumping into the rapids and bringing ashore a barrel that was floating down stream.

The dead body of a man was found in this barrel.

There were bad bruises on the head, but the face was recognized as that of Lacrosse.

So the detectives concluded that the desperate villain had taken the chance of a voyage in the barrel, hoping that it would come to land on the American side of the river.

They believed that the bruises had been due to the terrible shaking up the barrel received as it went through the rapids, bumping against rocks and being tossed by furious waves.

It was not until Sheriff Dunn told them so that they had heard that Lacrosse had a brother.

"I think," said Nick, "that I can see what's coming, but you'd better tell us about it."

"I will, Mr. Carter," replied Dunn. "I was informed last evening that Malcolm had disappeared."

"You mean the man who lived near St. Catharines?"

"Yes."

"What was his business?"

"Farmer."

"Honest man, I suppose."

"Perfectly. Everybody respected him."

"Well?"

"I went out to his place and made an investigation. I learned that Malcolm's brother, the man you know as Lacrosse, had been seen skulking about the farm. Nothing was known of what he did there, but I was told how Malcolm hadn't been seen for some time, and I was shown a place where there were signs of a struggle."

"Was this near where Malcolm lived?"

"Yes; on his farm, but some distance from the house. There were footprints to show that two men had had a fight, and there were bloodstains on the ground. Then we found an iron bar under some bushes."

"I suppose it had suspicious marks on it."

"I should say so; bloodstains and a few gray hairs sticking to the end. A doctor proved quickly that it was human blood and human hair. The footprints of one man were found pointing toward the Niagara River. We set a dog on the trail, and followed it to a point just below the falls. There the scent was lost."

"Were you at work at this last night?"

"Yes. We got to the river about sunrise. Then we heard of what you had done. I went at once to make an examination of the body. This took some time, but I found it and I know that it was the body of Malcolm."

"The farmer?"

"Yes."

"Malcolm and his brother, Lacrosse, must have looked very much alike."

"They did. They were twins."

"Ah!"

"But there was a mark by which they could be told apart without fail."

"What was it?"

"A scar on the forehead?"

"Not a white scar?"

"No. If that had been the case you would have noticed it, and your suspicions would have been aroused. The scar was red."

"We saw it."

"Doubtless; and you thought it was a fresh bruise?"

"We did."

"No wonder. It always looked as if Malcolm had been hit the day before, but he had carried that scar for years. It came from an accident while he was chopping down a tree."

Nick thought a moment.

Then he drew a long breath and said:

"I thought we had got through with Lacrosse."

"I thought you ought to be told about it," remarked the deputy sheriff.

Nick went on as if he had not heard:

"I see the scheme. That doesn't do any good now, but I see it. Lacrosse, finding that the boundary line was so well guarded that he could not cross into the States without getting captured, had to do something to blind us.

"He murdered his brother and sent his body down the river, reckoning that we would find it sooner or later.

"We did so, and, of course, supposed that it was the body of the man we were after.

"That being the case, of course we stopped watching the bridges and ferries.

"It's a thousand to one that as soon as we left the boundary line unguarded, Lacrosse slipped over, and, by this time, is far away.

"It was a successful scheme, as clever as it was villainous.

"You're right, sheriff, I ought to be told about it. There are only a few more questions to ask. How do you think Lacrosse managed to get his brother's dead body from St. Catherines to the river without being discovered?"

"He stole one of his brother's horses and a wagon."

"Sure?"

"Oh, yes. Horse and wagon were missing, and that led the farmhands to suppose that Malcolm had gone somewhere on business. We found in our investigation that Lacrosse had taken the dead body of his brother to the bushes where we found the iron bar and hid it until he could go up to the barn and get a horse and wagon and an empty barrel.

"There's no doubt about this part of it, Mr. Carter."

"All right. I am sure you have found out the

truth. Now, tell me what you did when you found the body that had been in the barrel."

"I was asked what had become of you."

"Well?"

"I was told that you had gone to Buffalo on another case."

"Yes, we had a little business here, but we managed to wind it up in no time."

"So they said at police headquarters, where I went to inquire for you. They told me you had started back for New York. Thinking that perhaps you hadn't got out of town yet, I ran to the hotel and met you, as you know, just as you were going to leave."

"Then you haven't told anybody else about this matter?"

"Not exactly."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I haven't told anybody here, but up at the Falls I said, as soon as I saw the body, 'That's Farmer Malcolm,' and two or three who were standing around heard me."

"Well, that couldn't be helped, and I presume no harm's done. I will leave my assistants here——"

"Then you mean to follow the matter up?"

"Indeed I do! Lacrosse is one of the most rascally villains alive. He's beaten me, and you needn't suppose that I'm going to give up until I've had another shy at him. I mean to bring that man to the gallows."

"You can if you catch him, for he'll have to be tried in Canada, and we hang people over there, you know."

CHAPTER II.

THE PORTER'S QUEER DREAM.

Nick turned to Chick and Patsy and spoke to them rapidly.

"I have still time," he said, "to catch the train for New York. I am going on."

"Do you think Lacrosse has gone there?" asked Chick.

"I do. I believed that that was the place he was making for when he was trying to get over the line, for he knows that there's no place to hide in so good as a big city."

"And you want us to look out for this end?"

"Yes. The sheriff has undoubtedly got the facts straight so far as he found them, but you may get onto other things, and it is possible, of course, that our man is still in this vicinity. I want you to make another examination of the body found in the barrel and wire me what you think."

"I shall expect to find a telegram from you when I get to the city."

There was no need to give his clever assistants any more points on that matter.

He could depend on their judgment, but there was one other little thing about which he spoke to Patsy.

"It would be a mistake," said Nick, "to suppose that this man is a fool. He's proved that he is as sharp as they make them, and, while I think he has gone straight to New York, the fact may be that he isn't so far away."

"So I shall want to get out of town without his knowing it. Who knows but that there are men in the hotel now who are confederates of his?"

While he was speaking, Nick was disguising himself.

Patsy knew what was wanted.

"Shall I get a cab for you?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Nick; "side door."

The young detective went out at once.

"You do things thoroughly," remarked Sheriff Dunn.

"We have to," Nick responded. "Once in a while we get on to a crook who plays into our hands so that there's no fun in catching him, but Lacrosse isn't that sort. It won't do to take chances on his forgetting anything. He knows that if I learn of his escape, I shall get after him, and I'll follow him around the world, if it's necessary."

"I hope you get him without all that trouble."

"I expect to, sheriff; and I hope you will follow

Chick's advice in anything that needs to be done at this end."

"Certainly, Mr. Carter."

"And, Chick, I'll leave my grip here. Express it to me some time later in the day."

"All right, Nick."

The disguise was then finished, Nick shook hands with the two men and left them.

He went down to the side door of the hotel and found a cab waiting for him.

The driver understood what he was to do, for Patsy had given him his orders.

Nick got in, and was driven to the railroad station.

He glanced out of the side windows of the cab as it rolled away from the hotel, but saw nothing to interest him.

There was no window in the back.

If there had been, the detective probably would have seen something to make him think.

As it was, not having eyes in the back of his head, and not being able to look through wood and iron, he did not see a man hurry from the corner opposite the hotel and get into another cab that stood near by.

He did not know that the second cab followed him until it was near the railroad.

Then the second cab stopped suddenly and the passenger got out, going into the station by the baggage-room door.

Nick knew nothing of this and Patsy knew nothing of it, for, as soon as Patsy had ordered the cab, he had gone back into the hotel, expecting to see Nick in the room with Sheriff Dunn.

When Patsy returned to the room, Nick had gone.

It was not suspected by any of them that a man had been hanging around the hotel ever since they went to it after finishing their business at police headquarters.

This man might not have known Nick Carter in his disguise, but he could not fail to recognize Patsy when he went out for a cab, for the young detective was not disguised at all.

And it was not a difficult thing for the man to guess that Patsy was getting the cab for his chief.

Having guessed so much, it was easy enough to make another good guess: that the bearded man who came from the side door of the hotel was none other than Nick Carter.

But of course this man who chased Nick's cab may have thought he was somebody else.

He didn't make himself known to Nick.

On the contrary, he walked around the baggage-room, pretending to look for a missing trunk until the New York train was just pulling out.

Then he ran hurriedly across the tracks and boarded the smoking car.

Meantime, Nick had arrived at the station with several minutes to spare.

He had bought his ticket and a magazine, and then walked around the waiting-rooms.

Apparently, he was killing time, and he didn't seem to see anybody.

In fact, he saw everybody there, studied every face, and decided that not only was Lacrosse not in the crowd, but that there was nobody there who knew him or who had any interest in him.

So, when he went to the train, he settled down to read without a thought of Lacrosse or the crimes he had committed.

For, in Nick's opinion, there was nothing to be gained by thinking of the matter at this time.

"The boys will work up the evidence around the Falls," he reflected, "and I shall hear from them when I get to New York. Then my work will be cut out for me, and I shall have to think and hustle until I come upon Lacrosse's tracks."

It was about the middle of the afternoon when Nick's train left Buffalo.

At six o'clock he went into the dining car, and spent an hour over his meal.

After that he went forward to the Pullman smoker and enjoyed a cigar.

He had to go through several cars to get to the smoker, but they were all sleepers.

Further forward was an ordinary day coach and an ordinary smoker.

Nick did not go into either of these cars.

If he had it isn't likely that he would have seen anything suspicious, for there were several passengers in each car who were snoozing with their hats over their faces.

One of them was the man who had hurriedly boarded the train, after pretending to look for a missing trunk, but if Nick had seen him he would not have thought of lifting the man's hat to see what face was under it.

When Nick returned to his sleeper, he found that the porter had made up his berth.

It was rather early in the evening, but, as there was nothing else to do, he went to bed.

For days before this he had been on a hard hunt for Lacrosse and the smugglers.

He had not had half time for sleep, and, therefore, though he had not felt tired, he had hardly lain down before he was unconscious.

He was awakened for a moment when the train stopped at the first two or three stations, but after that he slept as soundly as if he were at home.

The sleeper was not full.

Nick had a section to himself, and there was one section near the front end of the car that was not occupied at all.

The porter had not made it up, but sat sprawled out on the seats, dozing as the train sped on toward New York.

Albany had been passed.

It was considerably after midnight, and there was to be no other stop until the train arrived in the city. The porter turned over on his other side, and, as he did so, he thought he saw a man in the forward end of the car.

He sat up and rubbed his eyes.

The light was dim, but he was certain now that he saw nobody.

Nevertheless, he was almost certain that he had seen somebody, and he got up to investigate.

"Perhaps some passenger am sick," muttered the porter.

He went slowly to the forward end where there was a washroom with one seat for men who wanted to smoke without going to the smoking-car.

Nobody was there.

"Must have been dreamin'," thought the porter. "Ain't nobody be'n stirrin' in dis car 'less 'twas the brakeman. Dat's what it was! the brakeman, an' he's gone forward."

If he hadn't been so sleepy, he might have tried the closet door that opened from the washroom.

And if he had tried that door—but he didn't.

Instead of doing so, he turned about and went back to the seats where he had been dozing.

He stretched himself into a comfortable position and closed his eyes.

There was nothing doing, and why should he bother to keep awake?

It was some minutes after that—how many, the porter never knew—that he had a dream of being in a dentist's office and having a tooth pulled.

He thought that the dentist yanked and that a tooth as big as a house came out.

It didn't seem to hurt him any, but he was so surprised that he sat up, broad awake.

For an instant, he couldn't make out what had happened.

He felt the shaking of the train and heard it rumbling, and yet he still seemed to be in the dentist's office.

Of course, he had been dreaming; he knew that, and yet—why did it still seem as if the dentist—

Ah! the smell—ether!

The air of the car was thick with it.

That was what made it seem as if he was in a dentist's office.

Undoubtedly, it was that that had given him the queer dream, about which he began to grin.

Then suddenly he felt serious.

Ether in the sleeping-car?

What for?

How did it get there?

The porter was no fool.

He was all awake now, and he wondered with not a little fear about that strange smell.

He remembered the man he had seen.

"Somebody sick, for sure," he muttered.

It was his business to help the passengers, and he felt terribly guilty for having gone to sleep while on duty.

Getting up, he went along the aisle, sniffing of the poisoned air and trying to locate it.

The smell seemed to be heaviest in the middle of the car, but all the curtains were drawn tight, and there was no noise except that of the train and the snoring of one man near the further end.

The more the porter sniffed the more worried he became.

At last, and it was not more than a minute since he waked from his dream, he went to the forward end and began a careful examination of every berth.

He did not waken anybody, but he pulled the curtains aside and looked in at each sleeper.

There was nothing to satisfy him until he came to lower berth Number 6.

In that he saw a man lying on his back, with his hands partly drawn up.

The fists were clinched.

One knee was raised, too, as if the man had tried to struggle, or as if he had been uneasy in his sleep.

The porter could not see the man's face.

Something, perhaps the corner of the sheet, lay across it.

He pulled the curtain open wider that he might see more clearly.

Then, to his horror, he saw that the thing across the passenger's face, was a towel.

It was crammed upon the passenger's mouth and nose.

The heavy smell of ether came from it.

Evidently the towel had been soaked with the deadly stuff.

On the train sheet carried by the conductor the

name of the passenger occupying lower berth Number 6 was Benjamin Fuller; but his real name was Nicholas Carter.

CHAPTER III.

STRANGE PROCEEDINGS.

"Hi, dar!" cried the porter, in awful fright, "come outen dat!"

So saying, he jerked the towel from the sleeper's face, and threw it on the floor.

The passenger did not stir.

"Wake up!" exclaimed the porter, "or you'll sleep to def. Wake up, will yo'!"

He leaned in and caught the sleeping man by the shoulders, pulling and shaking him.

It was almost like shaking a bag of meal.

The only difference was that while a meal bag would have been no less lively, there was a strange, horrible gurgling in the passenger's throat.

He was not dead, then, not yet!

The porter dropped him back upon the berth and rushed to the front end of the car.

There were two glasses in the washroom.

He filled one of these with water, and then set it down.

Hurrying to his linen closet, he took out his keys to open the door, and started back in fresh fright.

The door was unlocked and open.

It was not till that instant that the porter had a suspicion as to the real truth.

He had been scared up to that moment by the fact that a passenger was in danger of his life, perhaps dead.

There hadn't been time to wonder how it happened.

Now it flashed upon him that the towel used to suffocate the passenger had been taken from his own closet.

Somebody, then, must have broken open the door or picked the lock.

Evidently it was the latter, for a glance showed that the door was sound.

The porter was sensible enough not to lose any time thinking about the matter.

His fright, luckily, made him act the faster.

Reaching to the bottom of the closet, he found a large tin pitcher.

This he took to the washroom and filled with water.

Then he hurried back to berth Number 6.

The passenger lay as before, face up, mouth open, motionless.

"Gawd help ye!" muttered the porter; "if yo' doan' wake now yo'l drown to def!"

With that he poured the whole contents of the pitcher upon the sleeper's face.

He was made hopeful at once, for the man began to sputter and cough.

Some of the water had gone down his throat.

Not a little got into his windpipe.

The porter then dropped the pitcher, and went to rubbing the passenger's arms violently.

All the while he kept up a chattering in a loud voice, begging the man to wake up, and crying out that he would die sure enough if he didn't.

The noise he made aroused the other passengers.

They began to put their heads out of the curtains.

"What's the matter?" they asked.

Before the porter could answer any of them the passenger upon whom he was working sat up.

"Don't say anything!" he ordered.

"What!" gasped the porter, delighted that the man was alive, but astonished at his words.

"Tell them," said the passenger, in a low tone, "that a man was sick but is getting better."

"For de Lawd's sake!" exclaimed the porter, but he turned about and said to the man nearest him:

"Aint nuffin much de matter. Man sick, dat's all. He gittin' eround lively now."

"That's right," whispered the "sick" passenger, rubbing his head. "Ether, eh? huh! ether in a sleeping car! Well, well!"

"Somebody done try to do you, sah?" asked the porter.

"Yes, and he came pretty close to it, eh?"

"I done t'ink so, sah."

"How did you happen to find me? Tell me about it."

The porter told of his queer dream, and in answer to some questions told also of the man he thought he had seen in the front end of the car.

"An' my linen closet was done bruk open," he concluded, picking up the towel. "He mus' ha' got dis yere from it."

He held the towel to the light, and showed the marking on it that proved that it belonged to the outfit of that car.

Meantime passengers were grumbling about the smell of ether in the car, although it was much less strong than at first.

"Open a door or ventilator," said the man whose life had been attempted. "I'm all right now."

"Yas, sah——"

"Wait a minute. How many cars are behind this one?"

"Two, sah."

"Both sleepers?"

"Yas, sah."

"All right. Don't say anything more about it. I'm going to get my clothes on, and then perhaps we'll take a trip through those other cars."

He drew the curtains to, and the porter went forward to open a window and the platform door.

Just then the wheels of the train began to grate, and the cars shook.

The brakes had been set.

"I wonder if we're coming to a station?" thought the passenger who had so nearly lost his life.

He raised the curtain beside his berth and looked out.

The night was dark, but he could see enough to make out that there were no houses near.

He saw also that the train was running along beside a river.

"The Hudson," he said to himself, and glanced at his watch. "Four o'clock," he continued; "we must be half-way between Albany and New York."

The train was going slower and slower, and he hurried his dressing.

He had all his clothes on just as the train stopped, and the porter came to him.

"Feelin' better, sah?" asked the porter.

"Yes. What place is this?"

"'Tain't no place at all, sah."

"Why have we stopped?"

"Dunno, sah. Signal, mebbe. Mebbe dar's a hot box."

"Are the vestibule doors open?"

"Like enough, sah. The brakeman might get off. Like enough most of 'em are shet. Wan't me ter go out an' see what's the matter fo' yo'?"

"No. I need fresh air, and I'll see for myself."

The passenger went to the rear platform of the car, and the porter followed.

Nobody was on the platform, but one of the vestibule doors was open.

It was one of the pair on the river side of the car.

The porter stuck out his hand, and drew it in with an exclamation of surprise.

"What is it?" asked the passenger.

"Nobody out dar," replied the porter. "No train hand opened dis door. See!"

He pointed to the lock that evidently had been forced.

In fact the door had been almost broken from its hinges.

"Funny," remarked the passenger. "Lots of crooked work going on to-night."

He started down the steps.

"Yo' no gwine ter git off, sah?" said the porter.

"I'll stand on the ground a moment," was the reply. "It will help clear my head."

"Train might start——"

Even at that instant there was a puffing forward, and the cars began to move.

The passenger had stepped off.

"Hi!" exclaimed the porter, "lemme help yo'."

He reached out his hand.

The passenger reached up and touched it, but let go again instantly.

He left something in the porter's hand.

"Keep it to remember me by," said the passenger.

"Fo' de Lawd's sake!" cried the porter, grasping what had been given to him, but leaning anxiously out of the door; "yo' no gwine ter stop in dis Gawd-fersaken place?"

The train was moving away.

Already the passenger was half-a-car length distant.

"Good-by," he called, cheerfully.

The porter was too astonished and frightened to answer.

He dared not get off, and he could not get his wits together quick enough to pull the signal cord.

A moment later, however, he thought of that, and got back to the middle of the platform.

"Dat ether," he was saying to himself, "muss ha' made dat po' man crazy as er bedtick."

His hand went up to the bellcord.

It seemed to be his duty to stop the train, tell the conductor, and so have a search made for the unfortunate passenger.

But while his hand was in air the light from the car lantern showed him something sticking between his fingers.

It was the thing the passenger had given him.

With a queer feeling of curiosity the porter took his hand down and examined the thing.

It was a hundred-dollar bill.

"Golly!" said the porter.

Then he thought a moment.

He looked up at the bellcord.

The train was going faster and faster.

"Dis yer chil' guesses," muttered the porter at last, "dat dat man knowed what he was erbout. If I stopped de train an' we made him git erboard agin, he'd take dis yere hunderd dollars away frum me. Huh! a hunderd dollars! Golly!"

And he didn't pull the bellcord.

The train sped on toward the city, leaving the passenger whose life had been attempted standing beside the tracks in the darkness.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MAN WITH A GUN.

When Nick Carter stepped from the car he found himself in front of a telegraph pole.

He leaned against it, and stood perfectly still, while the lights of the train disappeared around a curve, and its noise died away.

In the darkness no one could have told that a man was standing beside the pole.

If, however, Nick had moved about there was a chance that anybody who was watching might have seen him.

That fact was in his mind as he stood there.

So were a good many other things.

"I've had many a close call," he was saying to himself, "but none closer than that.

"I was sound asleep, for I was really tired; the noise of the train prevented me from rousing when the villain, whoever he was, pulled aside the curtain and reached in with the towel.

"He must have had the cloth mighty well soaked, for it made me helpless at once.

"I have a dim memory of something happening. I think I put up my hands and tried to struggle.

"But, being already asleep, and breathing a heavy dose of ether, I was a goner in half-a-second.

"Great luck that the porter awoke and had the sense to douse me with water.

"Well, the first question is, who did it?

"And the next is, where is he?"

As he thought the thing over, the detective was looking cautiously all around.

He believed that the would-be murderer was not far away.

"The villain left the train," he reflected, "as soon as, or before, it stopped.

"That accounts for the broken vestibule door.

"Probably he realized before he got off that his scheme had failed.

"I reckon that he went back to one of the rear cars after he soaked me with ether.

"Perhaps he stayed on the next platform and watched while the porter was bringing me to.

"Of course he wouldn't dare stay on the train, for he is somebody I know, and he would know that I would make a hunt for him and recognize him.

"I wonder if he stopped the train himself by ringing the signal-cord?

"Anyhow, I think he got off, and the question is, what became of him?

"First, though, who is he?

"I've got plenty of enemies.

"They're not all in prison.

"This may be some man who's had a grudge against me for years, but I'm thinking that the trouble isn't as old as that.

"It's a good gamble that the man who tried to do me up was my friend Malcolm, *alias* Lacrosse."

The more Nick thought about it the more sure he became that Lacrosse was the man.

He saw how it was possible for Lacrosse to shadow him and his assistants in Buffalo.

"Easiest thing in the world for such a smart crook," thought Nick. "Of course, we weren't on our guard against him, for we thought he was dead.

"We know now that he's alive.

"The only man who could have known that I was on that train would be a man who had watched us in Buffalo, and who was on the lookout when Patsy went for a cab.

"It must have been Lacrosse, and the deuce of it is that it would be just like him to be lying among some bushes now within a hundred feet of me.

"If he didn't see that I left the train he'll get up soon and go on.

"Then I'll have him.

"If he doesn't show up pretty soon I shall have to scare him up."

It had not taken Nick long to think the matter over in this way.

The roar of the train had no more than died away, and he was about to stir from the telegraph pole, when his attention was attracted by approaching footsteps.

They came from the south.

The detective grasped his revolver, and looked down the tracks.

At first he could see nothing moving, but the sound of steps walking on the sleepers came nearer, and at last he saw a man approaching.

He was swinging a lantern, and Nick knew that he was a track-walker.

The detective stood still until the track-walker was opposite him.

Then, in a low voice, he said:

"Hello, friend."

The man leaped aside, caught up a stone, and was about to throw it in the direction from which he thought the voice came.

He did not throw it, however, but stood with his arm raised, waiting for another sound.

Nick laughed, quietly.

The track-walker moved, but he did not throw the stone.

He could not see what to fire at, for he did not think of anybody as standing against the telegraph pole.

"If you fire at the nearest pole," said Nick "you'll be likely to hit me—that is, if you can throw straight."

"Who the devil are you?" demanded the track-walker.

"Nobody who means any harm to you," replied the detective.

Then he stepped away from the pole, and approached the man, who drew back and looked as if he meant to fight.

"Why!" exclaimed Nick, "what's the matter with you? Didn't you ever meet a stranger before?"

"Yes, I have," replied the man, suspiciously, "and

it was to-night, too; not three minutes ago, and he had a gun, too, just as you have, only his was longer."

The track-walker referred to Nick's revolver that gleamed in the lantern light.

Nick pocketed the weapon.

"There," he said, "now do you feel better?"

The man did not reply, but he held up his lantern so that he could see Nick's face.

"Well," said Nick, "what do you think?"

"You're a more decent-looking man than the other one," was the reply.

"Thank you," responded the detective, laughing. "You interest me a good deal. I should like to know something about this other man. Did you say he had a gun?"

"Yes. He chased me with it. That's why I felt so skittish when you spoke."

"Did he threaten you?"

"Yes. Said he'd blow my head open if I didn't get out of his way."

"Why should he say that?"

"I don't know."

"Had you said anything to him?"

"I said 'hello,'—but say! what call have you got to ask all these questions?"

"I'll tell you," replied Nick, frankly. "I was a passenger on the train that just stopped here. Another passenger tried to murder me. I believe he got off here, and I got off, too, to chase him up."

"Hully gee! Well, say, mister, I guess that was your man."

"I shouldn't wonder, and I want you to tell me about him. But first, why did the train stop here?"

"Because I signaled her."

"Oh! I didn't know but that he had pulled the cord."

"No; at least, I don't suppose he pulled the cord, for the train stopped at my signal."

"What was the matter?"

"Stone on the track."

"Did you find it?"

"Of course. It had rolled down the bank. The heavy rain of last night dislodged it, I suppose. I couldn't lift it, and so I set my lantern on the track some distance ahead, and went back to work at the stone. I had just rolled it out of the way when the express came along and stopped."

"What then?"

"Why, nothing. I just went up to the place where the lantern was, explained things to the engineer and conductor, and the train went on."

"What luck!" exclaimed Nick.

"Yes," said the track-walker, misunderstanding him, "if the stone had rolled down one minute after I passed, the train would have been wrecked."

"I meant," said Nick, "that it was lucky for that man that the train stopped just then. Five minutes more and I would have found him on board."

"Oh! I see."

"Now, tell me about him, please."

"Well, sir, the train had gone on, and I was starting along on my inspection when a man suddenly appeared right in front of me. 'Hello,' says I, for I usually speak to men I meet in the night. At that he up with a gun and aimed straight at me."

"'Go to the devil,' says he, ugly as thunder, 'and go damn quick or I'll blow your head off.'"

"That was friendly, wasn't it?" said Nick.

"Friendly!" exclaimed the track-walker; "well, yes, if you don't care what you say. I thought 'twas just the other way, and I jumped off the tracks like scat."

"What did he do?"

"Oh, he lowered the gun and ran on."

"Southward?"

"Yes."

"You said his gun was longer than mine."

"Yes. Yours is a revolver. He carried a rifle."

"A rifle!"

"Or a shotgun. I couldn't tell in the dark, and I wasn't so darned anxious to know exactly what it was. It might have been a cannon."

Nick laughed, but he was puzzled.

If this was the man who had tried to suffocate him with ether, how did he come to have a rifle?

It began to seem as if the man the track-walker had seen was a hunter, or some desperate fellow who had not been on the train.

And yet Nick felt that strong feeling which often meant as much to him as plain evidence, that this man was the would-be murderer; in one word, Lacrosse.

Then he remembered that he had noticed a passenger in the train who had a hunting outfit with him.

That passenger evidently had been in the Ca

adian wilds after big game, and was on his way home.

He had his rifle in a leather case on the seat beside him, and he had sat in the car ahead of Nick.

"It's possible," thought Nick, quickly, "that Lacrosse saw that rifle on his way through the train to my berth, and stole it. That would account for it."

If the detective had been at the Grand Central station when the train arrived at seven o'clock, he would have known that he had made a good guess, for there was a passenger making a great fuss because his rifle had disappeared during the night.

But other things happened before seven o'clock to make Nick think that he had guessed right.

"Well," said the detective, "I'm obliged to you for your information. I must run on now, and overtake that man before he gets to New York."

"He's got about five minutes the start of you," responded the track-walker, "and it's a long way to the city."

"How far?"

"Almost an even hundred miles."

"All right," said Nick, cheerfully, "we'll see who wins."

Nick started down the track at a trot.

He ran lightly, for he did not want to warn Lacrosse of his coming, though there was small danger of doing so, for the man's actions thus far showed that he had no idea that the detective had left the train.

It was pretty clear that Lacrosse had broken from the train, and concealed himself until the train went on, and then had hurried down the track.

But he might stop any moment, and lie in wait for a possible pursuer.

Well knowing the man's shrewdness, Nick was on his guard against a surprise, and after he had run about half-a-mile, he dropped to a walk.

In an hour more it would be light, and then he could safely go faster.

About half-a-mile further on Nick saw a boathouse at the edge of the river.

Evidently it belonged to the man whose land lay along the hill at the east of the railroad.

A wooden bridge went from the hillside over the tracks to the boathouse.

Nick stopped a moment, and looked at the boathouse.

"If I was running away," he thought, "I might do something here."

He stepped from the tracks and went up to the house.

The bridge ended at a door about fifteen feet from the ground.

There was another and broader door at the ground level.

It was closed, but when the detective took hold of the handle it opened at once.

"Ah!" said he, softly, and stepped inside.

He did not take out his pocket lantern, but he felt of the lock with his fingers.

This examination satisfied him that the door had been broken open.

CHAPTER V.

A ONE-SIDED BATTLE.

Nick closed the door behind him.

Then he made a quick investigation of the house.

He had no doubt that the door had been broken open by the man he was pursuing.

That could have been done for only one purpose: to steal a boat.

By this time the boat must have been stolen and the criminal was probably somewhere on the river.

If he had been hiding in the boathouse when the detective entered, he would have fired his rifle.

Nick found that the boathouse was built on piles, and that half its length was over the water.

That half was without a floor except for a narrow platform that ran along the sides.

At the river end was a wide door, and that also had been broken open.

A number of boats were stored in the house, some on the floor, some hanging from the walls.

Among them was a light canoe.

"I shall have to turn thief for a while," said Nick to himself, as he took down the canoe and set it in the water.

He found oars and paddles in a corner, and from them selected a paddle, with which he got into the canoe.

Then he pushed open the water door and glided out upon the river.

His position in paddling enabled him to look ahead.

The river was very broad there, and there were high hills upon the further side.

A little below him on that side were the street lights of a town.

"The West Shore Railroad," thought the detective, "runs through that town. I haven't got a timetable, but it's safe to say that there will be an early train for New York this morning. I should think my man would try to connect with that train."

While he was thinking and paddling, his eyes were searching the dark level of the river.

There was nothing to be seen except the town lights, and, far down the river, a few other lights, that evidently came from a tow of canalboats.

Nick paddled rapidly, for, sure that his man was on the river, he hoped to overtake him.

He kept the canoe pointed toward the town, but he could not keep a perfectly straight course, for the current bore him steadily southward.

For this reason the appearance of the lights changed slowly, and when he was about in the middle of the river an electric arc light, set on a pole near the shore, came into view.

Before that it had been concealed by a building.

Its bright rays made a narrow path of light upon the water and across that path the detective saw something moving.

It was a long way off, and at first he could not be sure that it was in motion.

Nick stopped paddling, holding the canoe so that the dark object at a distance was kept upon the path of light.

In a moment he became sure that it was moving.

Then he discerned the dip of oars.

A man was rowing a boat toward the other shore.

"Lacrosse!" whispered Nick.

He went to paddling again.

The man in the rowboat was not hurrying, and there seemed to be a good chance of heading him off before he arrived at the shore.

Nick paddled with perfect silence.

The only sound was the faint ripple caused by the swift progress of the canoe.

He steered his course so as to keep above the man in the rowboat, and so out of the path of light.

Two or three minutes passed.

Then the sky suddenly became light.

It seemed almost as clear as day.

Clouds had broken away, and left the moon shining full upon the river.

The detective saw his man, and saw that he had gained on him.

But the moonlight was as useful to the man in the rowboat as it was to Nick.

A good deal more so, in fact, as was proved immediately.

The man stopped rowing.

"Onto me," thought Nick.

The detective paddled harder than before.

Now he steered straight for the man he was pursuing.

The man in the boat stood up.

He was too far away for Nick to see just what he was doing, but he knew an instant later.

There was a flash from the boat.

A little later came the sharp report of a rifle, and at the same instant a thud and a little splash of water at the side of the canoe.

"No longer any doubt that that's Lacrosse," muttered Nick.

"There are few crooks who are such good marksmen as he is."

The rifle bullet had struck just in front of where Nick was kneeling.

It tore a hole in the canoe an inch below the water line.

Nick pressed his left thumb against the hole and continued to paddle with his right hand.

"Give me two minutes," thought the detective, "and I'll be in revolver range. From here I couldn't send a bullet half-way to him."

Lacrosse fired again.

He was undoubtedly trying to hit the detective, and, though he missed that mark, his shot was a good one.

The bullet struck the canoe behind Nick, and again there was a splash of water to show that a hole had been made below the water line.

"Well," thought Nick, turning to investigate the damage, "I can't stop more than two leaks at a time, and I can't gain on him if I have to stop paddling."

This thought was no sooner finished than a third shot came.

It struck the canoe directly beside the detective.

If it had been two feet higher it would have killed him.

As it was, it tore a rent along the bottom of the canoe.

This was worse than a dozen bullet holes.

It made a leak that could not be stopped with the fingers.

"I'm beaten at this game," thought the detective, "and I shall have to play foxy."

He half-rose from his seat, swung the paddle in the air, and then fell full length.

As he did so, he stopped the leaks as well as he could, and a moment later cautiously raised his head above the gunwale.

Lacrosse had sat down and was rowing again.

But he had changed his course.

Instead of making for the town on the west shore he was going down stream.

Nick was disappointed.

He had hoped that Lacrosse would row up to the canoe to make sure that he had killed his man.

That would have given the detective a chance to get in a revolver shot.

Now it was evident that Lacrosse was too sharp to take any such chance.

Probably he believed that he had wounded his pursuer, perhaps killed him, and he may have thought that the detective would drown before aid could come to him from shore.

Anyhow, it was clear that he meant to get far away from that place before landing, as it was almost certain that the shots had been heard in the town.

If he had gone ashore there, somebody would have been certain to ask him troublesome questions.

The detective ground his teeth.

"You're a good one!" he said; "as good as any I've ever tackled. You're worth catching, and I'll have you yet!"

The canoe was filling rapidly.

Nick saw that it would be impossible to keep afloat until he could paddle to either shore.

So he quietly rolled to one side, and out into the water.

He let the half-filled canoe drift down stream, while he swam to the east shore.

The sun had not yet risen, but it was light when he got to land.

Before that Lacrosse had disappeared around a bend in the river.

Nick was a mile or more below the boathouse, but he walked up the railroad tracks till he came to it.

Then he climbed the hill to the owner's house.

Nick explained to him just what had happened, and offered to pay for the canoe.

"Not a cent!" exclaimed the owner. "I am only sorry that you didn't capture the scoundrel."

"I sha'n't rest until I do," responded Nick.

"Well, if he brings you this way again, you take my boats without asking any questions. And, meantime, come in and let me get you some dry clothes."

Nick gladly accepted this invitation, and stayed at the house until he had had breakfast.

After that he was driven to the nearest railroad station, where he took a train for New York, arriving there before noon.

CHAPTER VI.

KNOCKED OUT.

He found a telegram from Chick that told him nothing new of importance.

Chick had become satisfied that Sheriff Dunn's story was correct, that the body of the man in the barrel was that of Farmer Malcolm, and that the murderer was no longer in the vicinity of Niagara Falls.

By this time, of course, Nick was sure of all that, and he set himself at once to the task of locating Lacrosse in New York.

His first step, after making a careful disguise, was to go to the West Shore Railroad station and make inquiries.

As it was quite possible that Lacrosse had changed his plans after the battle in the boats, and come to the city by the Central Road, Nick also made an investigation at the Grand Central station.

He made no headway at either place.

If Lacrosse had arrived in the city, he had come in such a way as not to attract anybody's attention.

There was nothing for the detective to do, therefore, but make a round of the dives where crooks were likely to be found.

Nick's long experience and perfect knowledge of New York City enabled him to do this as no other detective could have done it.

He knew that certain kinds of crooks on arriving in the city would make for the Bowery; that other kinds would steer clear of the Bowery and go to the Tenderloin, and so on.

Now Lacrosse was a Canadian. On the west side of town were a number of places kept by Canadians, and Nick decided to begin his investigation there.

But there was no sense in beginning at midday. Lacrosse had been awake all night.

That was certain, and it was probable that after reaching the city he would put some hours into sleep.

Besides, it wouldn't be like a clever crook to show himself by daylight.

So Nick stayed quietly at home until early in the evening.

Before going out he looked over the late editions of the papers, and found one item that interested him.

It was a dispatch from Haverstraw, a town on the Hudson river, telling how an empty rowboat had come ashore there in the morning.

"The boat had no name," said the paper, "but the initials 'J. E. D.' were painted on the stern. In the bottom of the boat was a fine hunting rifle, with the initials 'S. F. G.' engraved on the lock. It is supposed, as the rifle contained an empty cartridge, that the man whose initials are 'S. F. G.' shot himself and fell overboard."

The detective smiled.

"No suicide there," he said to himself, and went to his desk to write a letter.

The name of the man who owned the boat Lacrosse stole and the canoe Nick took was J. E. Dawson.

Nick wrote to him that his boat could probably be found at Haverstraw, and enclosed the item from the newspaper.

"If I knew the man whose initials are 'S. F. G.,'" he said, "I'd write to him, too, but I don't, and he'll have to recover his rifle in some other way."

The detective mailed the letter on the way to the West Side.

He was dressed as a countryman, and he appeared to be tipsy.

From the very start he was tackled by bunco steerers and confidence men, but he managed to shake them.

"I ain't investin' no money," he would say; "I'm blowin' of it in. I'm going ter see the taown. Come round an' see me day after to-morrow an' p'r'aps I'll talk business with ye. Hev suthin'."

So he treated the swindlers who tackled him, and went on from one place to another, until, about ten o'clock, he entered a basement dive where there were a good many tough characters idling about.

Two men near the door were talking in 'Canadian French.

The bartender, as Nick knew, had lived in Quebec.

"This will be a good place to stay in for a while," he thought, and he dropped into a chair at a table.

Nobody was sitting there at the time, but not many minutes had passed before three men took the other chairs.

Nick seemed to be dozing.

"Well, deacon," said one of the men, slapping Nick on the shoulder, "what do you think of New York?"

"Hay?" asked Nick, pretending to wake up.

"What do you think of New York?"

"You called me deacon, didn't ye?"

"Of course."

"Wal, say," and Nick looked uneasy, "who give it away? Who told you I was a deacon, hay? Goshtamighty! I wouldn't want the folks to hum to know I come in here."

"We won't tell on you," said one of the men. "We can show you more sights than you could find alone."

"Guess you could. Hev suthin', misters, an' we'll talk about it."

They went up to the bar.

Several of the men in the place looked on with smiles.

They thought the three had hooked a "sucker."

Nick noticed their smiles, but paid no attention to them.

He was more interested in the fact that as he crossed the floor a panel in a door at the back of the room was suddenly closed.

It was closed from behind, which showed that somebody had been in the back room looking through it.

"I wish I had had a glimpse of that fellow," thought the detective.

He thought he saw one of the three men with him nodding in the direction of the panel.

Some kind of game was up, of course; but was it possible that he had been recognized?

Possible, of course, especially if it was Lacrosse who was hiding in the back room.

Lacrosse had shown before that he was very keen in seeing through Nick Carter's disguises.

"What'll ye hev, gents?" said Nick, to the men at the bar with him.

They called for whisky and Nick did the same.

While they were drinking the men leaned close to him and spoke in low tones.

"Tell ye what, old man," said one, "it's pretty dangerous for a man like you to run about the city alone."

"Like enough," Nick admitted, "but nobody's done a thing to me yet."

"You might get into trouble any minute," remarked another.

"Yes," said the third, "there's plenty of toughs only looking for a chance to swipe a stranger on the head and go through him."

The detective made believe that he was frightened.

"Gosh!" he said, "I guess I'd better go back to my boarding-house. I don't want no trouble. I should hev to walk home if my pockets was picked."

"Got all your money with you, eh?"

"Every dum cent."

"Too bad. Hope you won't lose it."

"I say," said the third man, suddenly, "the deacon's a good sort of fellow. We ought to take care of him."

"That's so, and we ought to show him a thing or two. Let's sit down in the back room, where we can talk it over."

"That's the scheme! You see," turning to Nick and whispering, "there's men here right now who would go for you as soon as you left. Better come into the back room. You can go out by the side door and give them the slip."

"All right, gents, jest as you say," responded Nick.

They went into the back room, and one of the men ordered more drinks.

Nick knew as well as if he had been told that these fellows meant mischief.

If they really thought that he was a countryman they would try to rob him.

If they had seen through his disguise, or if they were acting under the orders of the man who had

signaled through the panel door, they might try to kill him.

There was no one in the back room when they went in, and, as far as Nick could see, there was but one door leading from it besides the one from the saloon.

That door probably opened on the street.

When the bartender brought in drinks, the detective saw the three men exchange glances.

They were ugly looks, and showed that the villains meant to lose no time.

One of them cautiously took a small bottle from his pocket.

Nick, of course, pretended not to see it.

He knew what that meant.

They were going to put knock-out drops in his liquor.

After that they would rob him, or, if they had nerve enough, kill him.

They were three to his one.

Every one of the three was a powerful fellow, and undoubtedly desperate, and if there should be a fight there was no doubt that other toughs would come from the saloon to help them.

Nick had faced too many situations like this to feel at all alarmed.

He knew that if he should sail in he could wipe up the floor with these three, and probably stand off the entire crew who were in the saloon.

But that was just what he did not want to do.

He had not come out for the purpose of making a big haul of crooks.

That would have been pleasant enough, but Nick Carter was out after one man, the Canadian crook known as Jean Lacrosse, and he was bound not to let anything interfere with getting that particular fellow.

He was not yet sure that Lacrosse was near, but he suspected that that was the case; and he remembered that on one occasion, which was described in a previous number of this weekly, Lacrosse had recognized him because of his display of great strength.

"I mustn't give myself away yet," thought Nick, as he saw one of the toughs secretly put knock-out drops in a whisky glass. "If I should clean them out they would suspect that I was Nick Carter, and then I'd have to begin over."

So the detective decided to let the villains drug him.

He drank the glass that was pushed toward him, and almost immediately his head fell forward on the table.

The rascals did their work quickly.

Nick's pockets were pulled inside out, and all his money was taken.

An old watch, that looked more valuable than it really was, went also.

Then he was lifted to his feet, the outside door was opened, and he was shoved across the sidewalk.

The detective staggered blindly to the middle of the street, where he fell full length and lay motionless.

The side door was closed at once, but it was opened again instantly and the three men came out.

Behind them was another, who spoke to them in a low voice.

It was Jean Lacrosse!

CHAPTER VII.

NICK FINDS HIS MAN.

The toughs had no sooner got out to the sidewalk than they hurriedly scrambled back into the saloon.

A policeman was coming around the corner.

He did not notice them, but he saw the man in the middle of the roadway.

Going to him, he stooped and shook him.

"Case of plain drunk," he began to mutter, when he was astonished to hear the fallen man speaking to him in a low but perfectly steady voice.

"Officer," said the detective, "keep your head now, and don't give me away. I am Nick Carter——"

"Great Scott!"

"Shake me! put up a good bluff! I shan't kick if you hurt me. Catch on?"

"All right, sir," and the policeman went to shaking Nick as if he were trying to wake him up.

"That's right," said the detective; "I want you to ring for an ambulance. There's a call at the corner. Then come and stand over me until it comes."

"I will, sir."

"Remember that you are being watched."

The policeman understood, and gave Nick another shake. Then he stood up, and said in a loud voice:

"Hang him! he's too drunk to stir. I'll have to send him to Bellevue."

With that he ran to the ambulance call, rang it, and returned quickly to the spot.

Usually such a scene draws a crowd in the city streets, no matter how late it is.

This time a few strolled up from the corner, but nobody came out from the saloon.

The men in there knew too much about the affair to show themselves.

"But as Nick had said, there were faces behind every darkened window watching to see what would happen.

The policeman stooped over Nick again.

"Did somebody try to do you, sir?" he asked in a whisper.

"Yes; I took knock-out drops."

"Whew! how do you manage to keep awake?"

"Because I didn't swallow the stuff; I got rid of it without them seeing me, but I want them to believe that I'm dead to the world."

"You look it, sir."

The ambulance arrived quickly, and Nick was lifted inside.

Then, without any delay, it was driven off toward Bellevue Hospital.

As soon as it was out of sight of the crowd Nick sat up and began to change his disguise with great rapidity.

"I've got to go back there at once," he said, "or my bird will fly the coop."

The ambulance surgeon had been told by the policeman what to expect, and he helped Nick make the change in his appearance.

Before the ambulance had gone three blocks Nick's former makeup had disappeared, and he looked like a plug-ugly tough.

Then he got out, and went back to the Canadian dive.

He did not go in, for the three men who had dosed him were standing outside.

They were at the corner, and looking up the street toward Bellevue, turning once in a while to look in other directions.

"By Jove!" thought Nick, "they suspect that I wasn't doped, and they're looking for me. They

expect I'll return. Of course, they're acting under the orders of Lacrosse. Well, perhaps they'll lead me to him if I am patient."

After leaving the ambulance Nick had not gone straight back.

Instead, he had gone up a couple of blocks, and then turned so as to come to the dive from another direction.

He did not go up to the men, but hid near, and waited.

It was a long wait.

More than an hour passed, and yet the men did not stir.

Now and then a man would come out from the basement dive and speak to them as he went away, but it was only to say, "So long" or something of that sort.

At last Nick decided to try to draw them out.

"If they're looking for me," he thought, "perhaps they'll recognize me, and do something to make things lively."

So he strolled past them.

They looked sharply at him, but gave no sign of recognizing him.

Nick thought that perhaps Lacrosse was in the dive waiting for them to bring him information.

To find out about this he went to the side door and entered.

There was the usual crowd of toughs in the place, but no sign of Lacrosse.

The detective went out again, and again passed close to the three.

They paid no attention to him, and he had another long wait.

At last, when it was after midnight, and the front door of the dive was closed, the three started away.

Of course Nick followed.

They went over toward the East Side, but when they came to Sixth avenue they separated.

One went to the south, another to the north, and the third continued on eastward.

"As I can't be in three places at the same time," thought the detective, "I'll take my chances with the fellow who's going north."

The man Nick chose to follow went along Sixth avenue until he came to an Elevated Railroad station, when he climbed the stairs to the uptown platform.

He boarded a Harlem train, and the detective rode

with him to the end of the line, at One Hundred and Fifty-fifth street.

The L road connects there with the Northern Railroad, on which there are all-night trains to certain suburbs.

The crook went to the ticket office, and asked some questions, from which Nick judged that he was not a regular traveler on the line.

"If he was," reasoned the detective, "he wouldn't have to ask questions about the running of trains."

There was a half-hour to wait before the next train on the Northern, during all of which time the crook sat in the waiting-room, with the detective less than ten feet away.

Nick could not make up his mind whether the fellow suspected that he was being shadowed.

It didn't matter much. The crook was one of Lacrosse's gang, and, sooner or later, he would show the way to his leader.

All Nick cared about, therefore, was to keep the man in sight, which was easy enough until the train started.

Nick had bought a ticket to the end of the line, and he sat in the car behind the smoker, the crook being in the latter car.

The detective saw him prepare to get out at Van Cortlandt Park, which is only a few miles from the city.

"I know your game now," said the detective to himself.

He left the train at that station, but on the other side of it, and slipped over to the edge of the golf grounds across the road, where he concealed himself behind a tree.

From there he saw the crook walk all around the station slowly, and finally sit down on a bench near the end of the platform.

He was waiting for the next train back to the city. This showed that he had taken his journey for the purpose of throwing a possible pursuer off the track.

Behind the tree Nick made another change in his disguise, and then waited there until the train for the city was heard coming around the curve a little distance away.

Knowing that the train would stop just before it came to the station to take on water for the engine, Nick crept from behind the tree and went up the road to the water tank.

When the train stopped there, he got aboard and took a seat in the smoker, pretending to be asleep.

A little later the train moved on to the station and stopped again.

The crook was the only passenger to get on.

Nick saw him look all around before mounting the car steps, and when he came into the smoker he sat down with a long breath of relief.

The detective wanted to laugh.

It was so clear that the crook believed that he was not being watched!

The night was nearly gone when they arrived again at One Hundred and Fifty-fifth street.

Street lamps were being put out, but the streets were still as quiet as at midnight.

The crook took an L train to One Hundred and Sixteenth street, and walked from there toward the east.

Nick followed with great caution now, for he believed that he was nearing the end of the chase.

He was led across the city to a block of tall tenements, not far from the river.

The crook entered one of the buildings, unlocking the door with a key that he took from his pocket.

When Nick tried the door a moment later, he found that it was well fastened.

Usually this would have given him no difficulty, for his wonderful little invention, the pick-lock, would have opened it for him.

But Nick had nothing of that kind with him, not even a revolver.

But the lack of a weapon was not going to keep Nick Carter from finishing the chase that had already cost him so much time.

Neither was a locked door.

He went on past the house a few steps for the purpose of looking into an alley that ran in beside it from the street.

It was clear that the alley led to a court at the back of the building.

Before he had time to investigate further a milk-wagon came along and stopped.

The milkman took several bottles into the alley, set them beside a door and returned with a handful of empty bottles.

He got into his wagon and drove away, and as he did so, the door opened, and a woman took in the bottles of milk.

Nick slipped softly up to the alley door.

He tried it, and found that the woman had left it unlocked.

Carefully he opened it and entered.

The woman was at work in a kitchen, and she did not hear the detective.

He tip-toed along the hallway to a flight of stairs, and went up to the first floor.

Then, before going further, he went into the front hall, and looked over the names on the bell pulls.

There were a good many of them, but none gave him the hint that he wanted.

The only thing he gained from this examination was the fact that all the flats on the first four stories seemed to be occupied.

On the fifth story there seemed to be one flat empty.

No name was on the bellpull.

It was at the back of the building.

Nick decided to step in there and wait till people in the house began to stir.

Then he hoped to recognize the voices of the crooks, and so trace them to their quarters.

He mounted the flights of stairs softly.

When he had come to the fifth floor he went to the back and quietly stopped beside the door of the empty flat and listened.

Suddenly the door was thrown open from the inside.

On the instant there was a racket.

The room was full of men.

They tipped over their chairs as they jumped up to see who had come in.

Nick recognized the faces of his three crooks at once.

He also recognized a harsh voice that cried out:

"Kill him! We must have no eavesdroppers! Down him!"

Nick had found Jean Lacrosse!

CHAPTER VIII.

GETTING CROOKS ON A STRING.

As usual, the detective took in the situation at a glance.

He saw that the crooks had been planning some villainy, probably a bank burglary, for their chairs had all been drawn about a man who was kneeling on the floor and drawing a map on a large piece of paper.

One of them had arisen to go out and had opened the door.

Lacrosse was standing in a corner of the room.

Beside him was a closet, and near the opposite corner was a window that opened upon the back court.

Most of the crooks were so startled that for a second they did not stir after leaping to their feet.

There was one exception—a man who jumped to the door, closed it and stood with his back against it.

Before he had done so, however, Nick had stepped inside.

Lacrosse was reaching into the closet.

An ugly grin was on his face and his eyes flashed dangerously.

Nick would have given anything for a revolver at that moment.

With one weapon he could have covered the whole crowd.

He was unarmed and he knew that Lacrosse, his most desperate enemy, was reaching into the closet for a revolver.

He had not penetrated his disguise, but Nick knew he would not hesitate to shoot.

The detective had been in many situations like this, and many a time he had escaped by a bold bluff and by the fact that crooks often hesitate to take instant advantage of getting an enemy into their power.

Every second's delay would help the detective.

But Nick's keen mind perceived that on this occasion there would be no delay.

They would take any chance to get rid of a spy.

It would be worse than foolish to fight these men single-handed.

With his enormous strength and skill the detective might hope to beat them if they used no weapons, but one shot from Lacrosse's revolver would settle the whole thing.

Nick perceived all this in a good deal less than a second.

He saw that it was necessary to beat a retreat, and on the instant he formed the most daring plan that ever had occurred to him in all his long experience.

It was a clever plan, too, for it included much more than his own escape.

He did not try to bluff the crooks, for he knew that with Lacrosse, at least, a bluff wouldn't go.

Instead he caught up the man who was nearest to him, held him firmly, and pushed his way rapidly toward the window.

"Tackle him!" yelled Lacrosse.

As he spoke he withdrew his hand from the closet, bringing out his revolver.

One fellow laid for Nick.

The detective let go of the man he was carrying long enough to swipe the second a terrific blow that sent him sprawling to the floor.

Then he picked up the first before he could break away, and in one stride more was at the window.

There he whirled about and held the man in front of him.

Lacrosse was about to fire, but he held off because the bullet would have had to go through the body of his comrade before it reached the detective.

For the shortest possible instant there was a pause.

The other crooks were standing out of the way to give Lacrosse a chance to fire.

Nick lifted the man he had seized and hurled him across the room toward Lacrosse.

The instant he let go he turned to the window, threw it up and let himself out.

The crooks gasped with astonishment.

It seemed impossible that the detective would try to escape by dropping from a fifth story window!

Even Lacrosse was startled into holding back his fire until it was too late.

For Nick delayed not at all.

Lowering himself quickly, until his weight hung by his fingers on the window ledge, he let go.

Down he went, five stories to the stone-paved court below.

But Nick did not take that fall in one drop.

There was a balcony to the floor below—the remains of a fire-escape.

The building was old, and this was the only part of the fire-escape left. The rest of it had tumbled to pieces. Nick landed on it, nearly going through the old wooden planking. A clothesline ran out from this to a pole in the middle of the yard, behind the house. It was new, ran on a pulley and slanted down toward the pole. Nick knew it would bear his weight. He grasped it, and, a moment later, had slid down to the pole. The line ran on a pulley, and Nick's weight carried him along. Then it was an easy matter descending to the ground.

The crooks crowded to the window, and before Lacrosse could push his way through them with his revolver, Nick was on the ground.

His knees had been bruised, but he was as lively and ready for business as ever.

Glancing up at the fifth-story window, he saw several heads, among them that of Lacrosse, taking aim with his revolver.

Before he could fire, Nick had dashed around into the alley and went in at the door by which he had gained entrance to the house.

The woman saw him this time and screamed.

"Don't be afraid," said Nick; "I am an officer."

There was no time to say more.

He had seen a reel of clothesline in the basement hallway when he was there before, and that was what he was after now.

Snatching it from the wall and unwinding it as he went, he ran out and around to the front door.

A boy was passing.

"Run to the corner," said Nick to him, "and get a policeman. It's worth a dollar to you to bring one here inside a minute."

The boy dashed away, and Nick ran up the steps to the front door.

There was a sound of hurried steps coming down the stairs.

Next instant the door opened, and a man tried to rush out.

The detective caught him, and, with marvelous quickness, caught the clothesline around his shoulders, drawing it in a knot so hard that the fellow could not move his arms.

Another was close behind him.

Nick served him in the same way.

Others were crowding up.

Some of them saw what was going on and bolted for the basement stairs.

Just then a policeman came running up.

"Crooks," said Nick, shortly; "catch them at the alley door."

The policeman went into the alley, blowing an alarm on his whistle as he ran.

Then for about two minutes there was a fierce struggle at both doors.

Nick and the policeman had all they wanted to do, for the crooks divided almost evenly, some trying to escape through the alley, others trying to force themselves past the detective.

Blocking the doorway, and using his fists when necessary, he managed it so that he handled one at a time, and the end of it was, so far as his part was concerned, that he had a clothesline full of wriggling, cursing crooks.

As a last resort they tried to run, knowing that one man alone would not be equal to holding them all.

Nick queered that move by tripping the two last men on the line.

They fell, and their comrades had to drag their weight as well as that of the detective who pulled back on the line for all he was worth.

The policeman had a tougher time, for he had no rope.

He handcuffed the first two that came at him and knocked another senseless with his nightstick.

But two fought past him and ran out of the alley to the street.

They didn't get far, for other officers had heard the policeman's warning whistle, and they came up in time to capture the two, and also to help Nick in controlling his linefull.

Then a patrol wagon was summoned, and the detective left the policemen to take the prisoners to the station.

"I'll be around later and make charges," he said, hurriedly. "There's one man—the leader of the gang—who hasn't turned up. I can't stop till I've got him."

That was the disappointing fact.

Lacrosse had had the sense not to try to escape.

He had witnessed the fight. He knew that the thug could be none other than Nick Carter in disguise.

If he started down the stairs he had gone back as soon as he saw that the detective was at the door ready for business.

The house was in an uproar.

Tenants, half-dressed or not dressed at all, were crowding the hallways, and, in the confusion, it was impossible at first to get a clew as to what had become of the chief villain, Nick Carter's enemy.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STOLEN TROLLEY CAR.

By this time there were more policeman at hand than were needed.

Nick, having explained who he was, borrowed a revolver from one of them and asked him to stand guard at the door for a few minutes.

The policeman stood so that he could watch both the front door and the alley at the same time.

Nick went into the building and dashed up the stairs.

He questioned the tenants as he went, but got no satisfactory answers.

Most of them were too frightened to speak at all, and those who could say anything were sure that no stranger was hiding in their flats.

So Nick went on until he came to the top floor, when he saw that the roof scuttle was open.

"I thought so!" he muttered, and climbed up.

At the top he was just in time to see Lacrosse disappearing through the scuttle of a building further along the street.

The detective hurried downstairs again, and reached the street a second later than Lacrosse did.

Nick saw him and gave chase.

Lacrosse saw that he was observed, and ran like deer to the next avenue, where luck favored him.

A northbound car was passing the corner and he jumped aboard.

At that hour in the morning, there were few cars moving, and there wasn't such a thing as a cab to be had anywhere.

The best Nick could do was to follow the car on foot and trust to his endurance and luck.

There was no trouble with the detective's endurance, but for once luck was decidedly against him.

In fact, that had been the case through all his experiences with Lacrosse.

Again and again, the Canadian crook had slipped rough Nick's fingers.

He was a smart one, but he was also a very lucky fellow.

It began to look as if he would get away this time and compel Nick to begin all over again.

Nick shouted for the car to stop, but the conductor did not hear him.

It went on at a rapid rate to the Harlem River, crossed it, and so on through Morrisania to the station of the New Rochelle branch of the New Haven railroad.

The first morning train was just leaving.

Nick saw Lacrosse leap from the car, run for the train and catch it.

Then the rascal stood on the rear platform and waved his hand triumphantly at the defeated detective.

Perhaps Lacrosse thought he was safe.

He might have been, if it had been anybody else who was pursuing him.

Nick Carter's blood was up.

"I'll have him!" he said to himself, through gritted teeth, and he hurried to the yardmaster of the railroad.

There followed a quick conversation which need not be repeated here.

The detective explained who he was, satisfied the railroad man and told him what he wanted.

The result was that within five minutes after the train had started, Nick was in pursuit on a special engine.

At the first station beyond Morrisania, the engine slowed down, and Nick shouted a question to the station agent, who was standing on the platform.

"Did anybody leave the train here?" he asked.

"No," replied the agent; "two men got aboard——"

Nick did not care to hear more.

He turned to the engineer and nodded.

Full speed was got up at once, and before the next station was reached, they had the train in sight.

They could see that nobody left the train there.

"Shall I signal the train to wait for us?" asked the engineer.

"No," replied Nick; "wait till we come to the next station."

The engine was close behind the train at the next stop.

Nick saw Lacrosse leave the train and start up a road leading inland.

Accordingly, he told the engineer to stop, and a moment later he was running up the same road.

The fugitive was in sight, but he was a good runner, and kept his lead for nearly two miles.

Then he left the road and struck across some open, rising ground.

Nick knew the roads all about there, and he saw a chance to head the crook off.

For this purpose he, too, left the road and dashed into a small forest.

When he came to the end of it he was near an-

other road, down which he believed Lacrosse would come.

And Nick was right.

Lacrosse did go down that road, but not afoot.

Nick got through the forest in time to see Lacrosse take a desperate chance to increase his lead.

There was a single-track trolley line on that road.

It ended at a point near the rising ground that Lacrosse went over.

At that moment a car had come to the end of the line, and the trolley had been reversed for the trip back to the nearest village.

There was a farmhouse at the place where the car stopped, and evidently the motorman and conductor were well acquainted there, for they had left the car and gone to the side door.

A young woman was in the door handing them cups of hot coffee.

That was probably a regular thing with them on their first morning run, and they doubtless reckoned that if they started back a little behind time, they could make up the loss by fast running before they got to the village.

Anyhow, there was the car, with no passenger aboard, and no conductor or motorman to take care of it.

Moreover, the motorman had not taken his wrench with him.

There it was on the power box of the front platform.

Nick saw Lacrosse turn aside and make for the car.

The crook ran softly to it, got on to the front platform, turned the crank and away the car started.

Conductor and motorman heard the noise of the start, dropped their coffee cups and ran to the road, yelling like mad.

Lacrosse shook his hand at them and turned on all the force of the current.

The car fairly leaped over the rails, and the two employees, knowing that it was useless to give chase, stood in the road, staring helplessly.

Not so Nick Carter.

He had calculated well when he cut across lots.

Even now he was at a point near the road and ahead of the trolley car.

By a great spurt he got to the road just as the car was flying by.

Lacrosse did not see him, for he was looking back at the conductor and motorman.

Nick swung aboard the rear platform.

He sat on the step a moment to catch his breath.

Then, revolver in hand, he stood up and walked through the car.

Something caused Lacrosse to turn his head and see him.

With a furious oath, he tried to turn the crank still further with one hand, while he drew his revolver with the other.

But he did not try to use his weapon, for Nick had him covered, and the look in the detective's eye told him that it would be instant death to fight.

So he stood sullenly until Nick came to the front platform.

"Shut off the power!" commanded the detective, sternly.

As he spoke, he made a quick movement and snatched Lacrosse's revolver from him.

He dropped it to the platform and kicked it from the car.

Lacrosse obeyed the command.

He turned the crank to the starting point, but it made no difference, for the car had got great headway, and it had begun to go down a long and rather steep grade.

"Put on the brake," ordered Nick, keeping the man covered.

Lacrosse turned the brake handle.

It went around loosely.

Something was wrong with it.

The car was going faster and faster.

"Reverse the current," said Nick.

Perhaps Lacrosse didn't know how to, and perhaps he was too nervous.

At all events he fumbled with the crank without producing any result.

Nick then took the crank.

Lacrosse made a movement as if he would leap from the car.

It would have been almost certain death to do so but Nick knew that he was desperate enough to take such a chance.

So he grasped the crook firmly with one hand, and with the other tried to reverse the current.

It wouldn't work.

He heard something snap, and then he knew that the car was beyond his control.

The hill became steeper, and the car flew down with the speed of a railroad train.

At the bottom there was a sharp curve into another road, and facing them on this other road was a wooden house.

Nick caught sight of a sign hung from the trolley wires.

It said:

"Go slow."

He smiled at sight of it.

"I wish to gracious we could go slow!" he muttered.

Lacrosse began to tremble.

There was no fight in him now.

"We shall be killed, sure!" he stammered.

"Well," responded the detective, "that will save the hangman a job so far as you are concerned, and as for me——"

"Let's jump!" pleaded the crook.

He began to struggle.

"No, sir!" cried Nick; "we'll take our chances together on this car, and, if it's my last ride, it will be yours, too."

Just then the car struck the curve at the bottom of the hill.

It left the tracks and dashed across the road.

The fence in the front of the house referred to broke like paper.

Across the front yard the car ploughed its way and smashed with terrific force against the wall.

Beams and boards gave way, as if the car was a huge cannon ball.

A wreck of broken timbers fell before the men on the platform, but the overhanging end of the car helped to save them from injury.

It was the sitting-room of the house they entered, and straight across it the car rolled, bringing up with another terrific bang against the partition.

That gave way as the outside wall had done, but not with so great a wreck.

It was enough to let the front end of the car go as far as the middle of the next room, where a man and his wife were at breakfast.

Then the car stopped.

The man had jumped away from the table, and the woman was screaming with terror.

"Well," said Nick, "this isn't a regular stopping-place, but we'll get off here."

He was uninjured, save for a few scratches and bruises that didn't count.

Lacrosse was not badly hurt, either, but he was so scared that he was helpless.

So it gave the detective no trouble to bind him securely with cord that he got from the people who lived in the house.

Then he calmed the frightened woman and explained matters to the man.

It may be said briefly that when the house-owner tried to collect damages from the railroad company for the wreck of his house, and the company were slow in coming to terms, Nick Carter sent his own check for the amount necessary to make the house as good as it was before.

"I'll pay any cost," said he, "for the satisfaction of capturing such a desperate criminal as Jean Lacrosse."

As for the latter, there is little more to tell, for he had had his last adventure with the Carters.

Nick took him to New York City, and had him locked up until officers from Canada could come with extradition papers.

In due time he was tried for the murder of his twin brother, convicted, and executed on the gallows in the prison yard at St. Catharines.

Sheriff Dunn sent Nick an account of it.

"You may be sure," he wrote, "that there was no mistake this time. You won't have any more trouble with the man you call Lacrosse."

THE END.

Next week's issue (No. 276) will contain "Nick Carter's Land Office; or, Outwitting a Clever Swindler." The sheriff was right. Lacrosse was done for in earnest, but there were other crooks to make life interesting for Nick Carter and his assistants, and they soon were in another hot tussle.



Last week was a banner week in this contest. More stories came in than during any of the previous weeks. Try and keep on breaking the record, boys.

Look on page 30 for full particulars of the contest.

His Sweetheart's Letter.

(By Arthur Nordstrom, Minnesota.)

A colonel on his tour of inspection unexpectedly entered the drill room when he came across a couple of soldiers, one of them reading a letter aloud, while the other was listening and at the same time stopping up the ears of the reader.

"What are you doing there?" the puzzled officer inquired of the former.

"You see, colonel, I'm reading to Atkins, who can't read himself, a letter from his sweetheart."

"And you, Atkins, what in the world are you doing?"

"Please, colonel, I am stopping up Murphy's ears with both hands, because I don't mind his reading my sweetheart's letter, but I don't want him to hear a single word of what she has written."

Justice.

(By Harry Powell, Millville, N. J.)

"All I demand for my client," shouted the attorney in the voice of a man who was paid for it, "is justice."

"Sorry I can't oblige you," replied the judge. "The law won't allow me to give him more than seven years."

Masher.

"Your cook is a very handsome girl."

"She is; she mashes the potatoes by simply looking at them."

An Unreal Prayer.

(By Pierce Boyd, Virginia.)

At one time there lived near one of our Southern towns a half-witted darkey, who made some pretensions to being religious, and was in the habit of going to an old mill, not far from his home, where he engaged in his devotions behind the mill race.

One day some young men, who were aware of the negro's practice, followed him to the mill, and secreted themselves on the other side of the mill race near the flood gate, that they might hear what he would say. After a few minutes they heard him say:

"Oh, Lawd, Ise so deservin' of Thy fate that if you were to open the race an' let the water out and drown me, it would be no more than I deserved."

No sooner had he made this confession than the youth on the opposite side hoisted the floodgate and let the water out upon him, and he was almost hidden from sight. After a time he managed to scramble out, and was heard to say:

"Oh, golly, massa! this is an awful world; a poor nigger can't say a t'ing in a joke but it's took in earnest."

Farmer Kornstubbles' Letter.

(By Emil Neils, N. D.)

Boxkartoun, cal.

"Dere Sur: I have saw a copy of yure pappar here and wud like to ast you sum questshuns. If you do want to bother with questshuns will you kindly give this to sum Responsibul man who will give satisfackshun. I see by the pappars that part of the Crow Reservation is to cum in fur settelment—Has it cum in yet, if not, when is it cuming I wish to no exact lokatun es I cannot find it on my map. Plese send me a map wun uf them roler kind sos I kin use it fur a partishun in my bed-rume. What do yu rase and do yu farm by eregashun or do yu depend on rane.

"Ef by eregashun plese state ef a man has to du enny thing els to rase a crop. How cold dus it get in winter and wud a swetter I have be warm enuf durin Jannery ef a man wus out dores hurding shepe. Is frute a suck-sess, is there wild frute, if so what kind is there for a man whuse wife is stuck on making jell. Is there enny game, as I have a dubble baralled shot gun, and a pup whu has kleaned up this entire naborhud an is hankerin fur uther wurlds tu konker. Whut is the prinsipul krop an whut is the yeald uf potatoes an uther sereceals.

"Give me the prise uv land and also uv living such es flower, bakun, meet and uther vegetabels. Prises uv hogs, horses, kous, poultry and uther groceries. Is it Healthy thare esspecially fur rumatism. How dus ground rent. Is there plenty uv timber or is it mostly pairre sos a man kan plow without running against a stump with his hed. Have you enny Indjuns if so how menmy, an aer they hosstil if so how much. Cud a man mak enny thing ef he brot along his Fiddle.

"I have a pattend washin mashine an a churn, wud it be well to ship and kin I get a kow fur her keep. Whut is lumber wuth an kin I git slabs at the mill cheep. Have yu enny skules. I have a large familly and I want tu kontinner there edjikashun.

"Is there ennything you think of I have not ast, if so please state.

"Yures Truley,

"Hiram kornstubble.

Pa's Trip to the State Fair.

(By Robert A. Wiggins, Ga.)

Thar wus ma and pa an all uv us chillern er settin er roun ther fire er watin fer pa tu tell us uv his trip las fall. Hit uster be Marthysville way back yander in pa's an ma's fust memberance. But ets as big, I reckon, as New York now, an thim thar fokes keep siden on changen ther nam uv et.

"Well," sez pa, "that thar plas ain't berginin ter be what ets craked up ter be. Why, whin me an Luke Johnson got thar we wus plum lost. I niver seed sich howses theyer bigger ern ther new cowpin, an hier than iny pine yu can start in thes diggins."

"Punch er nuther not in ther fier, Lige," sez he tu Bud, "an lite my pipe, sez he tu Lilly Ann.

"Whut fust struck me wus ther site uv fokes. Wal neou me an Luke hed tu croud an push an pull powful tu git tu ther stret, an arter weuns got out thar wus er about er mile uv kerriges an stages like er stanin er watin. Everybodys got hosses up thar an som mity fine uns tu. Two er three uv thim thar cullard gemmen tride tu git us tu go an ride in ther kerriges, but sez I Ime uster walkin an I kin walkin fas er nugh fer me. So we kep er goin an mity soon got on er nuther stret whut wus called White Halls—ther stret wus brick clur acrost an not er bit uv mud, an mity hep uv peples wus er walkin on thet stret, an weuns felt kinder tu hum, an Luke he stoped er lookin in er windy whut had britches an cotes an neck gear uv every scription. Weuns kep er goin' bout un hour, an sez I tu Luke whars ther fare? Wal neou sez thets moren I knos. So sein er man er stanin er lookin down tords us I tuk ther liberty tu ax him which er way wus ther fare. But he wus plum crazy lookt like tu me, an narry a thing cud he tell, an sed sumthin bout hay seeds, but sez I, weuns got er plenty er hay tu hum, weuns is lookin fur ther fare. Wal sez he er dyin er lafin, ets ther other side uv town. I seed he wus er gren horn, an I lowed as how he wudent er known beans ef ther bag wus upen. So arter walkin er nuther while I axt er man, oldish lookin, whar tu find ther fare an he lowed, go thet way pointen his finger north like an when youns cums tu ther peach tree take ther stret car. So off weuns went an I kno weuns went er cler mile an I hain't seed no peach tree yit. So I axt wun uv thim thar car drivers whar ther fare wus an he wus as perlite as he kud be an sez pile in, an Ill spill youns when yu git thar, turnin to ma Becky thars cars thar whut ain't got no hosses nor no injuns, they er powful cars—gist er runnin, an tu my dyin day I niver spect tu see such er nuther site. Thars powful smart men thar, they can ketch ther litenin, when et thunders down thar an put it wires an thet thars whut flies thim cars. But I tell youns I sont up er feverent

prar fur tu spar me an gide me. I felt mity curis tho—an didnt study bout et moren I kud help. I gist kep er thinkin uv Becky an ther chillern—Becky an ther chillern. I wus plum sorrie I left this monton tu go thar. But direckly we got thar an thet man sed as how thet wus ther place, an shore nuff er wus an I got my ticket, an ther gate minder he pinched off er pice an gived et back ter me.

"Wal, thet fare et wus purty fine. Thim thar cows, an hogs, an chickens wus ther finest I ever seed. I tride ter by er hin an er rooster, but thim thar fokes wudent sell um, thim wus pets I reckon. Arter er while I tuk er mity wrindin like in my chist, an I told Luke as how et must be mity nigh eatin time, an thar wus er eatin house an fer twinty-five cints er pice we got er nuff tu sorter kill hunger an so we wus satisfide an sot eout tu see thim thar race hosses. Ime er tellin ther truth Becky, I wudent give tin dullors fer narry critter thar. Why ther er as poore as Jobs Tucky, an yu kud kount ther ribs, an gist the hide um, thim sharpers kivered um up with blankets. Thars runners tho, gist got er move on um: Et wud er bin er site ter seed um nef theyd er bin fat. Thar wus er lot uv cand peches an all kinds uv sitch an some powful year corn bout like weuns lower cut. But me an Luke thort as how weuns had better finder place tu sleep berfore nite sot in, an thin fer thim thar cars. But I wont so powful skerd so I sot an tuck et ezy Tell thet car driver er least ways ther back un, axt us whar we wanted tu stop. Weuns air huntin in uv er bed. Wal sez he hump thin. So we lit off rite by er perliceman, an I must give thet thar fello a good name becace he wus powful good an lowed as how benist we wus strangers weuns arter tu have er gide boy, an er stepin in er big hows he tuck er little thing down with er string in et an thar wus er big box thet ther string jined ter an lo an berhole he wint ter talkin ter et gist like et wus er man an sez he gimme number io please, helo sez he is thet number tin? Well sez he sind down one uv yer best boys. All rite sez he, good by. Luke sez I kinder in er lo wisper hes ez crazy az er lunitick, hes dangerous. I am skerd aint yu. Kno sez Luke I aint. But I seed how whit he wuz an er trimlin an I started ter leve. But bout thet time cum ther funniest boy yu ever hurd uv er ridin on er tu whild consarn gist er flyin an bip he hit ther street. Ali rite sez he I am yer boy frum number tin. Wal thet thar bete me, howsomever thet thar box sont ther wurd I dont kno but et did, an I larnt thin thet thim thar same litinin wires run tu number tins hows an rite et down I reckon. Thet perlice man wus powful good an lowed tu thet funnie pale fast boy with big specks tu karry me an Luke tu er spectable Hotel er er boardn' hows, an sez he alrite cap. Hopin thars er tip in et. No sez I thar no tip we left him tu hum. But cum tu studdy I hain't seed er dog since we left ther monton. Thet thar boy he laft an hollored an laft, but bliss yu I hadint seed nuthin tu tickel anybody. Anyhow, by an by we cum tu er big tall hows an sez ther boy heres yer place ets all rite step up an rite yer name sez he. So ther man what wached ther book he pusht et tu me an I tuck er pin an writ et plane.

"John Josh Wiregrass, an

"Luke Johnson,

"Frum Cracker Hill Districk.

"Ther book minder looked powful hard at et an wint

ter yellin gist er holered, an told er boy tu take me an Luke ter five thirty-five an ther tin boy sez he, Ime er bound ter see yu saft in yer room an ther nigger walket weuns boy an all inter er powful little room narry er bed nur cher gist her couch like wither lookin glass clur acrost et an gist as weuns clurd ther flore. Oh sez I er shedin uv turs, I thort we wus kilt. Ther room et swung roun an thin flew up. An er nigger kitched hole uv er rope an tride ter hole, but et kep er goin. Oh Becky, sez he et wus afful. Luke he dropped down er prain an I tride tu pra, but I kudent, I gist sayed oh Lord Ime er comin', merci Ime er gonner. Becase et started up an thin down ergin, an thets all whut I know tell whin I cum tu my mine thar was er million lookt like tu me er standin er roun with er doctah a cole water a meetin hows draps an I wus plum wet, but thank my stars Ime here yit.

"Whin I cum plum tu I axt fer Luke but Ime skerd hes gone lest ways me an thet boy wint er roun till I giv him up fer dead, an I cum hum an haint seed him since, gee sez Bud hes ter him kase Mandy sed so least ways whin I seed yu er comin she sed as how hur pas smartin mine he cum yisterday. Well chillern ets bed-time. Less all turn in an giv our thanks fer er saft turnin hum, an go tu sleepe."

The Trials of a Schoolmistress.

(By Jos. Fletcher, Mass.)

Teacher (in mental arithmetic): "If there were three peaches on the table, Johnny, and your little sister should eat one of them, how many would be left?"

Johnny: "How many little sisters would be left?"

Teacher: "Now, listen, Johnny: If there were three peaches on the table, and your little sister should eat one, how many would be left?"

Johnny: "We ain't had a peach in the house this year, let alone three."

Teacher: "We are only supposing the peaches to be on the table."

Johnny: "Then they wouldn't be real peaches?"

Teacher: "No."

Johnny: "Would they be preserved?"

Teacher: "Certainly not."

Johnny: "Pickled peaches?"

Teacher: "No, no. There wouldn't be any peaches at all, as I told you, Johnny; we only suppose the three peaches to be there."

Johnny: "Then there wouldn't be any peaches, of course."

Teacher: "Now, Johnny, put that knife in your pocket or I will take it away, and pay attention to what I am saying. We imagine three peaches to be on the table."

Johnny: "Yes."

Teacher: "And your little sister eats one of them and then goes away."

Johnny: "Yes, but she wouldn't go away until she had finished the three. You don't know my little sister."

Teacher: "But suppose your mother was there and wouldn't let her eat but one?"

Johnny: "Mother's out of town and won't be back until next week."

Teacher (sternly): "Now, then, Johnny, I will put

the question once more, and if you do not answer it correctly I shall keep you after school. If three peaches were on the table, and your little sister were to eat one of them, how many would be left?"

Johnny (straightening up): "There wouldn't be any peaches left. I'd grab the other two."

Teacher (touching the bell): "The scholars are now dismissed. Johnny White will remain where he is."

Patsy's Idea of Divinity.

(By Ed. Maloney, Mass.)

One sunny morning Patsy went to the country school for the first time. As it happened, he was the first one to be called upon.

"Patsy," said the teacher, "how many Gods are there?"

He quickly responded:

"Three, sir."

"Take your seat!" thundered the master, "and in five minutes if you don't answer correctly I'll welt you."

The five minutes passed, and Patsy stood up.

"Five, sir." He received the promised "welting," and took his seat for ten minutes for consideration.

Ten minutes was up and Patsy, thinking he had not fixed the number sufficiently high before, answered, "Ten, sir."

He saw the ferule descending and, bolting out the door, he cleared a five-railed fence, and broke like a quarter horse across the field. Panting from exertion, he met a lad with a book under his arm.

"Where are you going?" asked Patsy.

"To school, yonder," was the reply.

"You are, are you?" said Patsy, quietly. "How many Gods are they?"

"One," answered the boy.

"Well, you better not go down there or you will never come back alive. I left them with ten, and that wasn't enough to satisfy them, so I bolted."

Weighing Hogs.

(By Jacob Levy, Pa.)

Young Farmer: "What do you charge to weigh hogs, mister?"

Grist Mill Owner: "Oh, get on and I'll weigh you for nothing."

A Few Things from An Undertaker's Notebook.

(By Eric H. Palmer, New York.)

WHY JOHNNY GOT BAD MARKS.

Teacher: "Johnny, is it right to say, 'you don't know nothing?'"

Johnny: "Yes'm."

Teacher: "Why, Johnny?"

Johnny: "Because yer don't."

Teacher: "What do five red apples and five green ones give?"

Johnny: "A bellyache."

Teacher: "Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?"

Johnny: "Quill pens, I guess, 'cause there was no typewriters."

Teacher: "If you took \$12, \$15 and \$7, what would you get?"

Johnny: "Six months."

Teacher: "If you should ask your father for five cents, your mother for five, and your brother for five, what would you get?"

Johnny: "Nothing."

Teacher: "Spell 'arbiter,' Johnny."

Johnny: "A-h, b-i-t-e h-e-r."

A NEWSBOY'S WILL.

Jenuare 31, 189 nine.

Ter the fellers it consarns—

Dis is ter certifi thet I, Scrappy Towers uv New York Sitty, U. S. A. (use Sam's apricots) in sain mine give as my las will an testimeant ter

Yail Kollege	the sum uv	3cst.
Swipsey Jones	" " "	2cst.
His brudder	" " "	1cst.
Newsboys Hom	" " "	the rest

Gran Total \$.11
(singed)

Voors trooly,
Scrappy Towers.

Wittnesses,

Johnny Kerns, frend uv abov.
his

Pete X the Warf Rat, the same
mark

(Finis.)

ODDS AND ENDS.

Who makes the most money unlawfully?
The counterfeiter, generally.

"Laties und schentlemans, steb dis vay; here is vhere you ged the besdt fits. Dot nice suidt, sefen tollar. Steb in! You vill ged a fit sure."

Note.—The "laties and schentlemans" generally did.

"I'll be hanged!" muttered the man who refused to treat the cowboys.
He was.

When little Bobby was told to stand on his feet he replied:

"Ma, I can't take 'em off. So how can I stand on them? I can stand on the floor, though!"

The Judge.

(By Chas. De Land, Wis.)

One town I passed through they arrested me, and took me into the courtroom, which was in a barroom.

Courtroom and barroom all in the same room.

Beer bar on one side, law bar on the other. And when I came in there were two men behind the bars, the judge and the bartender.

But the judge was behind the beer bar. He was trying a case of wine.

They took me over to the beer bar and when I laughed the judge shouted, "Order!"

So we all did.

And after we all had a drink they took me over to the law bar. The judge says, "What is the charge against this man?" meaning me.

The bartender says, "Seven-sixty, including the cigars."

I refused to settle without a pick. So the officer gave me one.

I says, "Judge, I'm a good fellow. I have money and I'll prove it if you will take evidence."

The judge said he would take evidence, so I told the bartender to pour some out. And the bartender poured out three fingers of the best evidence in the place. Then the judge called for the bottle. He put the bottle on the stand and he continued taking evidence until the evidence was all in.

And when the evidence was all in I says, "Now, judge, what do you think you can hold on the evidence?"

The judge said he did not think he could hold anything on the evidence. He says, "I'm in luck if I hold the evidence."

And two minutes later he went out on the sidewalk and reversed his decision. Just then a friend of his came along and says, "Hello, judge, what's up?"

The judge says, "Everything but the cork, I guess!"

Some Fine Ones.

(By Martin McNichols, Ill.)

A bragger, boasting of his strength, said he could lower a cask into the river and pull up thirty gallons of water.

"Why, that's nothing," said an onlooker. "I can lower a boat into the water and pull up the river."

A tourist asked a porter how long the road ran. "It does not run at all, to my knowledge," said the porter.

"Then I will make you run," said the tourist, and he proceeded to do so.

A boy went into a store, and going up to the counter the following dialogue took place:

Small Boy: "My mother wants a pound of coffee, and said she would pay you Monday."

Waiter: "Tell your mother we don't give credit."

Small Boy: "She don't want credit, she wants coffee."

A small boy, named Johnny, asked his father the name of a large building they were passing.

"That is the blind asylum," said his father.

"Then what's the use of having windows in it, if it's blind?" said Johnny.

Why does a room seem empty when there is a crowd of married people in it?

Because there is not a single person in the room.

What is the difference between a dude and a butcher?

A dude dresses to kill, and a butcher kills to dress.

Stamp and Coin Department.

STRIKING-LOOKING STAMPS.

One of the most striking sets of stamps issued recently is that for the Malay settlements of Perak, Pahang, Negri Sembilan, and Selangor. There are different sets for each of the above places, similar except for change of name. They are printed in two colors, the low values, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 10 and 50c. being all of the same design, with head of a very savage-looking tiger with mouth open in center. The \$1 and \$5 are larger and oblong, and have a group of elephants in center.

Salvador has been one of the most prolific stamp issuing countries of recent years. It issued a new set of stamps, of ten or twelve values, every year, and in 1895 and 1896 issued two full set of regular stamps, besides postage due, postal pack, officially sealed, and surcharged provisional stamps, not to mention a full line of envelopes, postal cards and wrappers. The last issue, just out, is very handsome, and comprises eleven values, 1c. to \$1, each with a different design.

A good instance of increase of value of postage stamps is shown by the 3c. scarlet of 1866. A New York collector bought one for \$1.50 a few years ago. His collection is now being sold by auction, and this stamp will bring about \$50.

CORRESPONDENCE.

L. P. Mathews.—No premium.

J. Leslie.—It is worth about a cent.

John Kerski.—Your dollar is worth about \$1.50.

Louis Myers.—Write to the Scott Stamp & Coin Company.


Thomas Glelack.—Your coin is a valuable one. Take it to some numismatist and have it appraised.

J. G. W.—You are right in regard to the coins. There is no premium to speak of, however, on either.

M. M.—You do not send a very full description of your coin. Send to the Scott Stamp and Coin Co.

Frank Fischer.—Your coins are worth only their face value. A short time ago we printed in an answer to a correspondent a list of United States pennies on which there is a premium. Look back over your Nick Carter Weeklies and you will find it.

L. H. Smith.—Send to the Scott Stamp and Coin Co. In sending them enclose a stamped envelope addressed to yourself and they will be returned. There is a slight premium on the stamps. No premium on your cent, however. Read the answer to Frank Fisher.

 \$1 worth of Tricks & Make-ups, sent postpaid for 25 cents stamps or silver. A nice Mustache or full Beard, Irish or Side Whiskers, any color, bottle Spirit Gum to stick them on. Box of Burnt Cork to blacken up. The Rubber Mouth, big teeth, secret & apparatus for performing the great vanishing half-dollar trick. This big offer is to get your address to send my large file, set of plays, wigs, tricks & agit. latest novelties. Mention paper you saw this in and I will also put in a Heavy GOLD plate finger Ring FREE, send size. Address Chas. Marshall, Mfr., Lockport, N.Y.

A SPLENDID PRIZE CONTEST.

It is to Laugh!

Of course you all like funny stories—the kind you have been reading lately in the NICK CARTER WEEKLY. If you can write any like them send them in, that is if you want

**A FIRST RATE UP-TO-DATE BANJO,
A SPLENDID ALL-WOOL SWEATER,
OR LONG DISTANCE MEGAPHONES.**

3 First Prizes The three boys who send in the three funniest stories will each receive a first-class banjo. A beautiful instrument. Perfect and up-to-date in every detail. These banjos are warranted in every particular. They have 11-inch calf heads, walnut necks and veneered finger boards, with celluloid inlaid position dots, raised frets, twenty-four nickel brackets and wired edge. These instruments can be easily mastered, and every boy should jump at the opportunity to win one.

5 Second Prizes The five boys who send us the next funniest stories will each receive a Spalding all-wool sweater. Any color you choose. Guaranteed all wool and full shaped to the body and arms.

10 Third Prizes The ten boys who send us the next funniest stories will receive a Spalding 12-inch "Long Distance" Megaphone, capable of carrying the sound of the human voice two miles.

HERE ARE THE DIRECTIONS:

This contest will close May 1st. Remember, whether your story wins a prize or not, it stands a good chance of being published, together with your name.

To become a contestant for these prizes you must cut out the Prize Contest Coupon printed herewith; fill it out properly, and send it to NICK CARTER WEEKLY, care of Street & Smith, 238 William Street, New York City, together with your story. No story will be considered that does not have this coupon accompanying it.

COUPON.

Nick Carter Weekly Prize Contest No 2.

Date.....1902

Name.....

City or Town.....

State.....

Title of Story.....

Amateur Detective Work.

Boys, in reading one of the Nick Carter stories did you ever try to think ahead and guess who was the criminal in the case?

In the case of "Nick Carter's Ocean Chase," for instance. How far had you read before you suspected that Palog was the man who had stolen the missing crown diamond?

In that case Nick suspected him from the day when he visited him with the official of Roumelia to tell him about the loss of the great diamond.

Or take the story of Nick Carter and the Guilty Governor. Had any of you any suspicions of the Governor before he admitted that he was the head of the Nihilists in the province of Perm?

Or in the story of the mine under the Grand Duke's palace, did any of you suspect the woman who had conceived the plot of blowing up the palace?

Each of the readers has a chance to find out how good a detective he is.

He has the facts of the case laid before him just a Nick Carter himself has.

Of course, he has not got Nick's experience or wonderful detective instinct. Still, he can prove whether or not he is a good detective by trying to decide in his own mind what the solution of the mystery is before he has read to the end of the story. The earlier in the story he is able to make his guess and the more accurate it is, the better detective he is.

We want to see what sort of detectives the readers of the NICK CARTER WEEKLY are.

We want one and all of you to write to us, telling us whether you were able to solve the mystery that Nick Carter had to solve before reading to the end of any of the stories.

Tell us how far you read before you arrived at your decision, and just what points guided you in making your decision. Your letters will be printed in this column.

Get to work, now, boys, and show what kind of detectives you are.

You are an American Boy and Should Know All About



Of Course You Have Seen It. Everybody is Talking of It.

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- 243—Nick Carter's Water Trail; or, The Strange Hiding-Place of a Millionaire.
- 244—Nick Carter's Dynamite Fiend; or, The Unraveling of False Clews.
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- 247—Nick Carter's Black Clew; or, Heard in the Dark.
- 248—Nick Carter's Strange Vacation; or, The Town That Was Hoodooed.
- 249—Nick Carter Investigating a Leak; or, One Page Missing.
- 250—Nick Carter's Double Clew; or, The Fatal Resemblance.
- 251—Nick Carter and "The Brown Robin"; or, The Unknown Letter Writer.
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- 261—Nick Carter on the Track of a Gentleman Burglar; or, Robbing a Thief.
- 262—Nick Carter Attacked; or, The Desperate Plot on the Detective's Life.
- 263—Nick Carter on the Trail of the River Pirates; or, The Dangerous Work on the River Front.
- 264—Nick Carter and the King of the Tramp Thieves; or, Patsy's Lone Hand Against the Hoboes.
- 265—Nick Carter and the Man in the Cask; or, Patsy's Terrible Predicament.
- 266—Nick Carter and the Shoplifters; or, The Automobile Clew.
- 267—Nick Carter's Ocean Chase; or, The Missing Crown Diamond.
- 268—Nick Carter and the Broken Dagger; or, The Black Man from Borneo.
- 269—Nick Carter's Advertisement; or, A New Way to Catch a Criminal.
- 270—Nick Carter and the Nihilists; or, The Mine Under the Grand Duke's Palace.
- 271—Nick Carter in the Convict Gang; or, Ida Jones to the Rescue.
- 272—Nick Carter and the Guilty Governor; or, The American Detective and the Russian Officer.

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